



# DEPALMA HAS THE POWER

Mike Childs and Alan Jones interviewed Brian DePalma in London during his visit there for the opening of *CARRIE*. DePalma had been attempting to reconcile our request for an interview with his busy schedule and managed the trick by conducting the interview in his limousine on the way to Heathrow airport to catch a flight for Paris

where *OBSSESSION* and a delayed release of *SISTERS* were about to open. [For a review of *SISTERS* see 3:1:28.]

*CARRIE* has proven to be DePalma's biggest commercial and critical success to date. Like his work in *SISTERS*, the film infuses a new vitality into the horror film genre just when it seemed to becoming stuck in ano-

ther repetitive groove—possession and exorcism *ad nauseam*. But the film also garnered the prestige of two Academy Award nominations for the performances of Sissy Spacek and Piper Laurie. [For a review of *CARRIE* with cast and credit information, see 5:3:20, and for biographical information and more DePalma interview see 4:2:8.]

BRIAN DEPALMA AND SISSY SPACEK ON *CARRIE*  
Interviewed by Mike Childs and Alan Jones





*Above. 1: De Palma directs the Prom sequence. 2:*

*Carrie (Sissy Spacek) destroys the high school gym with a wall of flame. 3: Filming the complex mock crucifixion scene with Piper Laurie.*

*4: Carrie flexes, focusing her telekinetic power for murder. Right:*

*Filming the car sequence, as Chris and Billy try to run-down Carrie as she returns home.*

*CARRIE, now in release from United Artists, continues Brian DePalma's mastery of the horror genre.*





## DEPALMA

**"Horror films are 'Hammer Films'--vampires and Frankenstein. I love those pictures, but I don't feel it's exactly what I'm doing. Maybe I'm trying to hammer out a new genre"**

*How did you first get involved with CARRIE?*

I read the book. It was suggested to me by a writer friend of mine. A writer friend of his, Stephen King, had written it. I guess this was almost two years ago [circa 1975]. I liked it a lot and proceeded to call my agent to find out who owned it. I found out that nobody had bought it yet. A lot of studios were considering it, so I called around to some of the people I knew and said it was a terrific book and I'm very interested in doing it. Then nothing happened for, I guess, six months. When I sold PHANTOM OF THE PARADISE to Fox I found out that they had in fact bought it for producer Paul Monash who had a multi-film deal with the studio. I met him and told him what I had in mind and that I wanted to do it. He listened to me, but nothing happened for another six months because somebody was writing a script from it--some lady from Texas had done the first draft. Then I heard from George Litto, my producer on OBSESSION, that the producer for CARRIE had called him and asked how I was and how I'd worked with him. George and I had struck up a good relationship on OBSESSION. Now the CARRIE project was in the hands of United Artists, and the head of production, Mike Medavoy, and the president, Eric Pleskow, were emphatic that they wanted me to direct the film. They don't think it should be made by anyone else. Paul Monash, however, was not sold on me and it was only because of pressure brought about by the studio people that he came around to thinking that maybe I was the right person for his film. So that's how I came to direct CARRIE!

*Did you ever have anyone else in mind other than Sissy Spacek for the title role?*

Yes. As a matter of fact, I had another lady in mind and had always felt that she would be the ideal person to play the part. Sissy read the book and liked it quite a lot and mentioned to me that she would be interested in playing the part. I knew Sissy quite well because she's Jack Fisk's wife, and Jack has designed a lot of pictures for me. Sissy came in to try it out, and of course she was quite good. She played all the parts--she played Sue Snell, Chris Hargenson, Carrie. She played everybody--and played them all really well--and I was sort of keeping her in the back of my mind, but I was still very much oriented towards this other girl. Then when we finally had our screen tests Sissy tested for the part of Carrie, and made everyone else look silly.

*You won't tell us who the other actress*

Mike Childs is our correspondent in London, and a former film critic for Capital Radio, where he produced a number of late night talk shows on the subject of horror films with guests like Terence Fisher and Freddie Francis.



**Left:** Margaret White (Piper Laurie) is stopped in mid-swing during her murderous rampage by flying kitchen utensils telekinetically controlled by Carrie. DePalma's audacious symbolism has Carrie (perhaps subconsciously) duplicate the configuration of the stigmata on her plastic statue of Jesus. **Right:** DePalma saves the best for last. In a dream sequence, Sue Snell (Amy Irving) comes to place flowers on Carrie's grave. And audiences appreciated the jolt, because DePalma knew how to scare without making the horror overly explicit or revolting.

was?

It was...It'll come to me...[It doesn't.]

*Why did you cast Piper Laurie, when she hadn't worked for so long?*

Piper Laurie was suggested to me by an executive at United Artists who lived close to Piper in Woodstock, New York. He told me Piper was interested in acting again and this would be a very good part for her to play. I said fine, I thought she was quite good in *THE HUSTLER* and would like to meet her. So when I came to New York I met Piper and she came in looking like Margaret White with this red hair and black outfit and I said "My God! This is it!" I liked the idea of making Margaret White very beautiful and sexual, instead of the usual dried-up old crone at the top of the hill.

*Amy Irving's real mother played Sue Snell's mother in CARRIE. Any particular reason?*

I've done this before in *SISTERS*. Jennifer Salt's real mother, Mary Davenport, plays her mother and Amy sort of suggested this to me. I knew her mother, Priscilla Pointer, was an actress, 'cause I was familiar with the stuff she did when they were part of San Francisco Repertory, when I met Priscilla. She was ideal for the part and there's something about mothers and daughters playing scenes together that takes on a reality, like a documentary reality, especially with the relationship between mother and daughter. They've had so many scenes together that suddenly the scenes they play in a movie have the authenticity of twenty years of a relationship that's hard to manufacture by anyone else.

*Did you cast John Travolta because of his popularity on WELCOME BACK KOTTER?*

No. I cast him before that. In fact, I never saw that series. He doesn't have a big part in *CARRIE*. But John was always the best for the role. He helped immensely. He was very cooperative, very helpful.

*You tried to put across the timelessness of the highschool prom.*

Yes. I did a lot of research about proms, having remembered my own. They're very much the same as they were. They haven't changed. The Senior Prom is the Senior Prom—it's still the big dance of the year and who's-with-who! I went to a few recently to check out to see if they had changed much—and they hadn't at all. A prom is like your first sexual experience. It never changes. In 1980 or 2001 we'll still be having puberty, adolescence, young manhood.

*It's the same with the actual prom song, by Pino Donaggio.*

Pino Donaggio wrote the score for *DON'T LOOK NOW*. I was put on to him by a good friend of mine, the *Time* magazine film critic Jay Cocks, who had always liked his music and suggested him to me when Bernard





*Top Right:* Carrie (Sissy Spacek), still trance-like in shock reaches home, but not safety. *Top Left:* She seeks comfort from her mother (Piper Laurie) who plans to murder her. *Left:* De Palma provides the proper genre atmosphere to set the stage for Carrie's final confrontation with her mother. The house, destroyed in the end by fire and explosion, is a meticulous half scale model designed by art director Jack Fisk, Sissy Spacek's husband.



Herrmann unfortunately passed away and I was looking for another composer. I listened to his records and talked it over with him and felt he was the right kind of combination.

*Margaret White's crucifixion scene has a direct lift from PSYCHO underlying it. Is this part of a tribute to Herrmann?*

When we originally put temporary music tracks on the film, we used a lot of Herrmann's music. You know, when you show a film without any music you put in what you think is appropriate for the scene. We first used some of SISTERS, then PSYCHO, and in the sinking of the house we used some of JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH. A whole pastiche of Herrmann. In the end, we used a very famous Italian piece of music for the processional walk to the grave-Albinoni I think it was--a very beautiful piece of music. Then when the hand comes up we cut back to SISTERS. I think Pino was definitely influenced by SISTERS. The flexing sound is very PSYCHO. I put in a temporary track and for all the flexes I put in a PSYCHO violin. We couldn't find the right sound, but anyway, it worked. Bernard came up with it, and Bernard, I'm glad we used it again!

He'll probably be very unhappy--he hated listening to his music being played against other films. When he first came to look at SISTERS I put his music in it all the way through--you know, VERTIGO, PSYCHO, MARNIE and whatever else I had. He heard it, and went into a rage! "Turn it off, turn it off!" "But Mr. Herrmann..." "Turn it off! How can you play that while I'm listening to the film. I don't want to listen to that--oh, don't do that!" He didn't want to hear his music played with the wrong movie. When he first saw OBSESSION he said, "It's a great movie and I can hear the score." He was looking at it and he heard the music in his head.

*The music is brilliant. You obviously admired him a lot.*

He was a great man. I loved him. He had a terrible temper. I hope he'll forgive me for using his violins, but they're very effective.

*Is Wendy Bartel, your production secretary on CARRIE, any relation to Paul, the director?*

Yes. She's his sister. She's a very good production secretary. I'd seen her working with Paul at New World Pictures and I got to know her and hired her away from New World. She's very good.

*Variety calls CARRIE "camp." Any comment?*

God, they're still using "camp?" The terminology of ancient persons...No, I don't think it's camp at all. It keeps very seriously within the realm of its own world. It has a very adolescent reality and it's very true to it.

*Unlike the novel, Carrie's telekinesis was basically played down in the film. Why?*

I felt the telekinesis was basically a device to trick, and I wanted to use it as an extension of her emotions--her feelings that were completely translated into actions, that only erupted when she got terribly excited, terribly anxious and terribly sad. It was always a little out of control, almost like FORBIDDEN PLANET where the Id monster is an intellectual man murdering people because he subconsciously wants to. I never wanted to use it arbitrarily, floating stuff around. In a movie that's kind of boring. Okay, she moves objects. As soon as you've establish-

ed that, I don't think you can do anymore with it. Just use it when it's needed and dramatically valid. To play with it, to me, would be very boring and ultimately it has to do with credibility. If you do it too much people will say "Come on!" In the cinema it's a trick: "Oh yeah, they put wires on the lamp and that's why it floats through the air!" You never want to get the audience to be so analytical and disassemble the trick. I only ever wanted to use it as an emotional expression of her passions.

*Gregory M. Auer did the special effects for CARRIE. You used him for PHANTOM OF THE PARADISE, too.*

He's very good. He's a nuts-and-bolts kind of guy...very soft spoken. He used to work for Disney. Special effects are like blind faith--you have to tell your man what you want to do, and hope to God when you get there he's figured out how to do it. Otherwise, you get the situation like in JAWS where the shark doesn't work--and if you wait six years maybe it will work! I was terribly worried about the special effects as I was on a very tight schedule.

*How much did CARRIE cost?*

\$1.8 million. A fifty day shooting schedule. Everything worked--except in the book stones hit the house. We had this conveyor-belt with rocks on it going up and pelting the house. The house that collapses was built to half scale. Jack Fisk designed it and did a very good job. It's very convincing. This was the last shot of the film and it's four o'clock in the morning. We had this conveyor-belt and we had fires planted and the house ready to collapse, and the conveyor-belt started and rocks got jammed in it. The rocks were too heavy. Well, it's late already, and the sun's coming up. Everybody's been up all night and the police are arriving due to the noise--they nearly arrested us! So we just went ahead and burned the house up and let it fly apart and sink into the earth. We thought, "Oh well..." and went home really depressed. But when we looked at it, it looked great--terrific! "Forget about the rocks!"

*Did the extended slow-motion Prom scene present any problems?*

I felt it was a very audacious step to try and shoot that kind of suspense in slow-motion. I had to make a choice to do it or not to do it. So I chose to do it, and hoped to God it would work out! I really wanted to stretch the suspense scene out for as long as I could.

Cutting slow-motion is very tricky--there is a whole different pace to it. It took us weeks and weeks to figure it out, to get the right cutting rhythm. Your editor has to get into the whole slow-motion form. It's really interesting.

The shower scene I always wanted to shoot in slow-motion. I wanted to get involved in this lyrical eroticism before the blood comes, and it's all wonderful, beautiful...the steam, Carrie's touching herself...and them *wham!* As soon as you cut from slow-motion to regular motion you're already in a jolt, because you're so used to the time sense. But I'd say the trickiest section was the Prom.

The other tricky one was the split-screen sequence. I felt the destruction had to be shown in split-screen, because how many times could you cut from Carrie to things moving around? You can overdo that. It's a dead cinematic device. So I thought I'd do it in split screen. I spent six weeks myself cut-

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ting it together. I had one hundred and fifty set-ups, trying to get this thing together. I put it all together and it lasted five minutes and it was just too complicated. Also, you lost a lot of visceral punch from full-screen action. Then my editor and I proceeded to pull out of the split-screen and use it just when we precisely needed it. Each time I use split-screen I continue to learn more and more about it. This worked some ways, but didn't work others. It's the one thing that makes me think everytime I look at the movie and say, "Well, maybe I didn't make the right choice there..."

*Sex is kept very low-key in your movies.*

I used it well in CARRIE without going over the top. Straight sex scenes are very hard to shoot because it's been so exploited and shot from fifty different ways. I mean, how many times can you show people getting into bed with each other--what is there to shoot?

*How did you feel about the ending of OBSESSION? Are we to question Cliff Robertson's consequences? The ending is a happy one of sorts, but will he suffer even though LaSalle's murder was in self-defense?*

He'd suffered too much anyway; it doesn't matter. Paul Schrader's ending actually went on for another act of obsession. I felt it was much too complicated and wouldn't sustain, so I abbreviated it. Robertson is arrested at the airport and goes into a mental institution for ten years. He gets out, grabs a gun and goes to Florence, goes in the same church, again Genevieve Bujold is there! But she doesn't recognize him as she's been in a catatonic state since her attempted suicide. The nuns at the clinic she's in want to try out a new form of hypnotherapy in which they re-enact the kidnapping a third time! Bujold thinks it's the first, and Robertson thinks it's the second...and it's then she says "Daddy, daddy..." as Robertson opens the suitcase with the money finally in the right place. It was an interesting sequence, but it just wouldn't have worked. It made Schrader very unhappy: he thought I'd truncated his masterpiece. He's never been the same since.

*Was this before Schrader wrote TAXI DRIVER?*

No. TAXI DRIVER was written before this, but OBSESSION was shot first.

*When you look back on PHANTOM OF THE PARADISE, can you see why it was the commercial flop it was?*

The picture played well in Los Angeles, but not in New York. It did badly in England, but well in France. When we revised the campaign in the U.S. and made it seem more like THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA than a horror/rock film, we got an entirely different response. I think the movie works. It was a very good idea.

I've always thought rock and horror were close stylistically. I felt I had a solution in combining two separate audiences. Obviously, I didn't. When you look at a film like TOMMY the audience turned out in force, but in fact the rock in that movie was bad. Divorced from the film the album sounds





*Right:* DePalma manipulates the audience unmercifully, some say almost sadistically. The success of *Carrie* (Sissy Spacek) with her first date (William Katt as Tommy Ross) and her triumph as Prom Queen is soon turned to disaster. *Left:* DePalma makes Carrie's revenge colossal, destroying the gym and the senior class along with it in a murderous pyrotechnic display. DePalma originally filmed and cut this sequence completely for split screen, but changed it afterwards when he felt it lessened the full impact of the disaster, using the split screen technique only sparingly.

awful. People went to see images put to music they'd been listening to for years. It was the same with *JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR* and *GODSPELL*. I still think *PHANTOM OF THE PARADISE* was an excellent idea. It just wasn't sold correctly. The emphasis should have been on a fantastic horror film. I enjoy it. It's one of my personal favorite films!

Perhaps *PHANTOM OF THE PARADISE* would work better as a play. Horror theatre is something that hasn't been properly explored. People really get scared by things happening on stage more than on film. Horror movies yes, but why no horror plays?

*Give us your views on explicit horror, in the vein of THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE?*

I haven't seen that. I must see it. I've heard so much about it. I guess I'm getting really disturbed by the fact that movies are getting so cruel and crude--stabblings and choppings--but it's all terrain that's been explored before, and unless you invoke it in a different way a good idea is going to look like all the other stuff that's around.

*Why is SISTERS only opening now in Paris?*

We didn't sell it to all territories at the time of release, and what with interest in *OBSESSION*, people want to know what else I've done.

*How is your work on THE DEMOLISHED MAN progressing?*

It's coming together very well. Let's hope in the next ten years I'm going to get it made! Murder in a telepathic society is telling everything in visual terms. I'm going to have to come up with a whole new language for this, which is really exciting. I read the first treatment in '65. I wrote a screenplay in '74. Now I'm rewriting my screenplay in '77. Maybe before I die I'll make this film!

It's somewhat akin to what I'm working on now, a film called *THE FURIES* for 20th Century-Fox. It concerns a telepathic boy and girl who are involved in some sort of elaborate CIA plot. It's a political thriller with telepathy in it.

*Do you want to remain in the horror genre or not?*

I've made so many films and people still keep saying "The Horror Genre." They never seem like horror films to me! Horror films are "Hammer Films"--vampires and *Frankenstein*. I love those pictures, but I don't feel it's exactly what I'm doing. Maybe I'm trying to hammer out a new genre, somehow...

*Well give it a name and people will use it!*

Yes...Hitchcock did it. I don't know what people called it before they coined "Hitchcockian?" They must have had some dime-store novel name for it. You never know... De Palmian?!? ■



## SPACEK

**"I'd love to work on another horror movie, as they are so stylized. If CARRIE is any yardstick to how horror films are going to be--yès, I want to do more!"**

Sissy Spacek was interviewed by Mike Childs and Alan Jones over breakfast at the Intercontinental Hotel in London, where she was appearing to promote the opening of CARRIE. The interview took place prior to the announcement of her Oscar nomination as "Best Actress" for her performance in CARRIE. Sissy was present at the Oscar ceremonies in Hollywood on March 28, but saw the award go instead to Faye Dunaway for her performance in NETWORK.

Sissy, christened Mary Elizabeth, is originally from Quitman, Texas (pop. 1000), 90 miles northeast of Dallas. After high school she yearned for a career as a singer/musician and, parents consenting, left for New York City to seek her fortune. There she stayed with her actor cousin, Rip Torn, and his wife Geraldine Page. When success in a musical career failed to materialize, she decided to study acting with Lee Strasberg while earning a living as a photographic model. Her first big break came with a small role in PRIME CUT, opposite Lee Marvin and Gene Hackman. Television work followed in movies like THE MIGRANTS with Cloris Leachman, the title role in KATHERINE, a Patty Hearst take-off, and guest spots on shows like THE WALTONS. Other movie work included the title role in GINGER IN THE MORNING and BADLANDS, in which her portrayal of a naive 15 year-old first brought Sissy critical recognition as the most talented young actress in years. She currently lives in Topanga Canyon, California, where she likes to ride horseback and get back to the simpler life and times of Quitman, Texas.

*How did you manage to get the title role in CARRIE?*

Well, Jack [Fisk, Sissy's husband] was going to be working on it and Brian called me and mentioned that I ought to get the book and read it, as there was a part in it that might be good for me. That was way early on, before things were definite. I took for granted he wanted me to do the part, so I got the book and read it and got all into it. Then two weeks later his secretary called and said they wanted me to come in and read for it. When I got there they were reading girls in groups of three! He must have called up everyone and said, "Here's a part that I think will be good for you!"

Everytime we were called in we were asked to read for Carrie, so I'd rub Vaseline in my hair and get all frumpy. But in my group of three I'd always end up reading Chris Hargenson's part! I just took for granted that would be the part I'd play. Not that the part was what I wanted, it just evolved that way.

I was very surprised when Brian did the screen tests that I was asked to test for Carrie and not Chris, as I had assumed. It disturbed me a bit because I knew he liked this other girl. Only three of us tested for Carrie. I'd gotten a Vanquish commercial for the day the test was going to be, and I never get





## SPACEK

**"I had to stand on that stage while everything was on fire! I got all the hair on my body practically singed off! I got so involved in it! 'Fire! What do you mean? It can't hurt me! I'm Carrie...'"**

commercials. I don't go up for commercials, now. I called Brian and said: "How come I'm not testing for Chris?" He said, "You read Chris better than anybody, but I just don't see you in that part--as a sexpot." I could have done that part, but Brian saw me less as Chris and more as Carrie as I'd go in with this Vaseline in my hair. But unless something extraordinary happened in the test, he was going to use the other girl. I told him I had a Vanquish commercial for the same day as the test and asked what I should do. He said, "Do the commercial."

That was on Thursday, and on Monday I was starting WELCOME TO L.A. The character in that movie was totally different. It was upsetting me because I was testing for a part when I already had one I should have been working on! If I was testing, though, I was going to get it. You don't want a bad film floating around. You never know who might get to see it. So I crammed that night. I worked with Jack--he was Tommy Ross, and he was Margaret White!--and I got it!

*Was the blood in the bucket real blood?*

No. I told them at first they could use real blood, I was so into the part! It was a mixture of karo syrup and food coloring. It was so sticky, and I would freeze on the sound stage! Brian had intended to use a new modern school--California State University--but a big, modern glass school would have been too intimidating for Carrie. She would have crawled along the corridors to get to class! Eventually we found an old, abandoned school, Pier Avenue School, in Hermosa Beach, about forty miles from L.A. Jack rebuilt the gymnasium in the sound stage, as it had to burn. The special effects were very interesting. I had to stand on that stage while everything was on fire! I got all the hair on my body practically singed off! I got so involved in it! "Fire?! What do you mean? It can't hurt me! I'm Carrie, I'll flex!" While I was on the platform, my cue was: "Leave the stage only when you can't stand the heat anymore. But walk slowly!"

*What about the sequence where you overturn Chris and Billy's car?*

That sequence was shot fast, but it was a stunt-girl not me. Because the film was so stylized, I wanted to do it--except I didn't want to get run over, of course! I worked with the stunt-girl a lot because at that point I wanted her body movements to be so stiff. The car was rigged with a "cannon." When the stunt-man got up to sixty miles-per-hour he shot a two-foot telephone pole out of the bottom of the car, which flipped it over! A second later, he blew up a gas can in the trunk--that flipped it over some more!

*Was the stunt-girl also used in the scene where Carrie falls down the stairs?*

Yes. They rigged a platform at the top of the stairs. When Piper stabs me, I fall back out of frame foot last. It's so well cut it looks like me. Poor girl. She had to do it three times! I have a still of her in mid-air, falling! This is one of my favorite sequences: the

stabbing, the fall, the scooting across the floor. I just loved it.

*Did you like the way the telekinesis was played down in the film, as opposed to the book?*

Very much. There had been more planned, but one's imagination can make things more outrageous than can be filmed.

We played down the crying, too. I didn't want Carrie to be a little wimp who cried all the time. So anytime she cried it was like a bottling in. There was never any release--she would cry but always push it back, so that all the time she was like a time-bomb. Finally it all comes out and she explodes.

The shower sequence was very tricky. I knew it had to be horrendous and bigger than life. She had to give the girls a motive for being so weird. Although a lot of that was what she saw, from Carrie's point of view. I used an etching from the Bible of a guy getting stoned to death. The Dore facial expressions are so intense and so much larger than life. The body movement, too, I wanted to have a strange quality. When the blood hits, it's almost like she looks up to God. It's coming from the heavens and that's where God lives. I wanted subtle touches like that.

*Did you find Carrie's transition from Ugly Duckling to Prom Queen difficult?*

Not really. I came out of that, Texas Proms, etc. That was the least exciting part of the movie. I hated wearing the makeup!

*How about the dancing sequence with William Katt?*

I loved that. The rhythm of the whole scene got me excited. We were spinning on a circle, and the camera moved the other way. We had to be on camera everytime we said a line. If anyone had explained it to me before we started I would have said it was impossible! It worked, and I couldn't believe it. We were on camera everytime! At the right time! It's an exhilarating scene. You share Carrie's happiness. It really comes through. Brian does that kind of thing real well. He takes your emotions from a horrific moment, to a funny moment, to a romantic moment, to a horrific moment. He's such a physical director, and such a fine boy.

The three of us working together--director, actress and Jack, the designer--were able to be totally involved with the project way before it started. We knew what would happen in any situation. We used to call Brian, so when he got back and turned on his answering machine he'd hear, "Brian, we've got this great idea!..."

There was one scene cut out of the film, primarily because it was shot in similar fashion to the dance. It would've worked, but the same technique wouldn't have. It established Carrie with herself. You saw Carrie's barriers, a smile that, in case her classmates changed their minds suddenly and realized she wasn't a nurd, she'd be ready. I wanted to show her alone, so you'd get a sense of her strength. The scene was in her bedroom upstairs. It was her only safe place, except it wasn't that so much, but that she had a box that she kept under the bed. I did the same thing when I was a child, a fishing-tackle box. Her inside self was in there. The real Carrie. The sensitive Carrie. The Carrie that was a poet and artist. She wasn't just a mashed up little girl. I wanted to show that something came out of being locked in that closet for weeks. Inside the box was her poetry, the fabric that she

eventually used for her dress, a picture of Tommy Ross, a snap-shot of her father. She was upstairs the day she'd been sent home early from school. The camera slowly pans around the room and you see flowers and pictures--a little girl's room, in fact. Then she sees her mother return and she runs around putting everything away and back under her bed. And this is where they started the scene--she grabs a sweater, buttons it up and puts the key to her box around her neck. But we couldn't use that shot because it was just too much spinning.

You may have noticed all the attic space between the stairs and Carrie's room? Well, the flooring wasn't finished and Carrie hid things there, too. Her mother wouldn't think of looking there even if she had hidden there. It was her own private world. I wanted to establish that, because at one time we thought that Carrie could crash through the floor to the kitchen (as it was underneath) after being stabbed--so she would literally crash through her own world, the one she had created.

*Could you have seen a future for Carrie and Tommy Ross if the practical joke hadn't been played?*

I'm sure. He was totally caught up in it. Carrie was much more sensitive than Sue Snell--remember when Sue and Tommy were in the teacher's office? Well, she says "We want to take Carrie to the Prom, don't we?" Tommy was more arrogant and sarcastic with Sue. I think he was so surprised with Carrie that he forgot she was the nurd. If anyone had tried to relate to her, they would have known she wasn't.

*Was that your hand in Sue Snell's nightmare?*

Yes, it was! Jack dug the hole, Brian yelled "Grab!" and that was my cue. Those rocks were pumice and they were heavy. It was the last day of shooting and I was all dolled-up and they wanted my stand in to do it. But my hand is my hand! It was claustrophobic, but very exciting. I couldn't see and what with the blood being slippery, I almost broke Amy's arm! The rocks scratched my arm to bits all the way down, but I wouldn't have missed that for the world!

*Can you see a future for yourself in the horror film genre?*

I always wanted to do a horror movie. I've been very affected by them in the past. It would all depend on the director and the project. I'd work with Brian again. He has enormous respect for actors. It was a dream to work with him because I had more freedom on CARRIE than anything else I'd worked on.

At one point he thought about me for PHANTOM OF THE PARADISE, but someone told him I couldn't sing! I started out as a musician, playing twelve-string guitar. I'm one heavy rock'n'roller! You'd never have guessed now. I eventually worked on PHANTOM OF THE PARADISE as set decorator. I would have loved a part. I would have played it differently. The film didn't work, but it could have, and it would have been a neat film!

Brian isn't your regular filmmaker. Neither are the other directors I've worked with. Working with a director is like having a relationship. For me, it's more the director than the project. But I'd love to work on another horror movie, as they are so stylized. If CARRIE is any yardstick to how horror films are going to be--yes, I want to do more!





The deceptive allure of evil in *CARRIE*. *Top Right*: Piper Laurie as Carrie's mother, scripture spouting widow Margaret White. *Top Left*: Nancy Allen as Chris Hargenson, the definitive teenage bitch who plots the monstrous joke against Carrie. *Bottom*: Carrie embraces her mother in the act of killing her in self-defense. De Palma uses the film's sharply defined symbols of good and evil and the morality play motif of the horror genre in a modern form as potent as the old Universal horror classics.





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